

The influence of the

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[177] medicine man is due to his supposed power of prophecy and divination. No explanation is offered of this power, nor does it appear that the Laibons are believed to enjoy the acquaintance and assistance of definite spiritual beings; but they can foretell the future by such methods as throwing stones out of a horn, inspecting the entrails of slaughtered animals, interpreting dreams, and delivering oracles when intoxicated with honey wine. Great, however, as is their influence, it does not appear that either among the Masai or the Nandi, where similar institutions prevail, they have ever attempted to assume a position like that of the various small sultans of the coast or the kings to the west of Lake Victoria.

791 The most celebrated of these medicine men was Mbatian, the father of the present holder of the office, Lenana, who died about 1890. He is celebrated for having prophesied outbreaks of cattle plague and small-pox, which duly came to pass; and also for having foretold the arrival of white people. It is generally said that he bade the Masai be friendly to them, but Mr. Hollis could not find any corroboration of this statement. His death was followed by a disputed succession. There is considerable discrepancy as to the details of the story, but, according to the versions taken down by Mr. Hollis (p. 327), Mbatian told his eldest son Sendeyo that on the morrow he would invest him with the insignia of a Laibon, of which the principal is an iron club. Lenana, the younger son, overheard, and presented himself before his father very early the next morning. Mbatian, who was very aged and had only one eye, behaved much like Isaac in similar circumstances, and gave his younger son the insignia, saying 'Thou shalt be great among thy brothers and among all the people.' In any case, Lenana succeeded, and was accepted as Laibon by all the Masai except the Loita. This created a division in the tribe, and as it roughly corresponded with the division between British and German territory, Sendeyo was long regarded as the chief of the German Masai and Lenana of the British. But in 1902 Sendeyo quarrelled with the German administration, made his peace with his brother, and came over to the British Protectorate.

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796 The religious ideas of the Masai, as collected by Mr. Hollis, are vague and unformulated. The commonest word for God is Eng-ai, which it will be observed is a substantive with a feminine article. Eng-ai appears to be used either quite indefinitely and impersonally of remarkable natural phenomena

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sä, näjöki 'l-tufiganak: 'Endura, amu emuta 'n-gishu. Ore en-döki ninderitere aadol naa 'l-ojofga oöän in-gäk anaa 'l-ötorok. Neiter sii 'l-chafgit aä, neitöki taa 'n-gishu.'

Nesipayu nenna pokirare: nepwönu 'l-Aisungun, nää 'n-gishu.

Ore sä 'n-gishu, nää sii ninye 'M-Batyany.

Ore etaa en-nä, neipot il-paiyani le-Matapato, a ol-oaho ötamanya, näjöki: 'Emindur to-'l-oaho linyi, amu alo aä; nairiwaki 'ndaa 'n-gishu te-'ng-al. Naa, tini induruduru, niä te-'mweiyän o-'l-minjaloi, nemuta 'n-gishu pökin, niarare 'l-maögati cogol, näari 'ndaa. Ore en-gerai ai naiäho 'n-dökitin o-'l-oiboni, ninye ol-oiboni linyi. Endaas imbaa naajöki 'ndaa.'

Näjöki 'l-paiyani pökin: 'Alya,' nepwo.

Ore p' eidip aashom, neipot 'M-Batyanyen-gerai enye kitok öji Sendeu, näjöki: 'Tayöku amu aiyöu naiäho 'n-dökitin o-'l-oiboni.'

Nejo Sendeu: 'Alya,' nelo airura.

Ore öjökiño kunna, naniög Ol-Onana öisudori ti-atwa ol-ale loo-'l-aaho, neinyötöto tadekenya, nelo eng-aji e-menye, näjo: 'Papa, aäuo.'

the people to move their grazing grounds, 'for,' he said, 'all the cattle will die. You will first of all see flies which make hives like bees, then the wild beasts will die, and afterwards the cattle.'

Both of these prophecies have come true: the Europeans have arrived, and the cattle died.

Mbatian himself died while the cattle plague was raging (circa 1890).

When on the point of death, he called the elders of Matapato, the sub-district in which he lived, and said to them: 'Do not move from your country for I am about to die, and I will send you cattle from heaven. If you move, you will die of small-pox, your cattle will all perish, you will have to fight with a powerful enemy, and you will be beaten. I wish my successor to be the son to whom I give the medicine-man's insignia. Obey him.'

The elders said: 'Very well,' and left.

When they had gone, Mbatian called his eldest son Sendeyo¹, and said to him: 'Come to-morrow morning for I wish to give you the medicine-man's insignia.'

Sendeyo replied: 'Very well,' and went to lie down.

While this was taking place, Lenana, who had hidden himself in the calf-shed, overheard the conversation. He arose early in the morning and went to his father's hut. On his arrival he said: 'Father I have come.'

¹ Lenana is sometimes said to be the eldest son of Mbatian.

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Ore 'M-Batyany na ol-móruo
kitok eata eng-oñgu nabo
ake, nemedol en-gerai enye,
neisho 'n-dökitin o-'l-oiboni,
aa ol-kuma le-'seghengei, o
en-gidoñg, o ol-tulet, o em-
bene, o 'n-doto e-'n-aibon,
nëjo: 'Iye oitore 'l-alaahera
linöno o ol-orere pókin.'

Ne'ya Ol-Önana 'n-dökitin
o-'l-oiboni, nelo.

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Ore p' eidip ashömo, nejiñg
Sendeu eng-aji e-menye, nē-
jökini: 'Ol-alaashe lino o'yawa
'n-dökitin o-'l-oiboni.' Ne-
goro naleñg Sendeu, nëjo:
'Maitore ol-alaashe lai, aarare
oo metua.'

Önaa nëä 'M-Batyany, nenu-
kari to-'l-Doinyo Orok.

Ore p' eidip atua, nëjo
kulikae-tuñiganak: 'Ol-Önana
ol-oiboni lañg, amu etiaka
'yook 'M-Batyany, "Aisho 'n-
dökitin o-'l-oiboni en-gerai ai
nara ol-oiboni linyi.'" Netoni
te-idye aaboitare Ol-Önana.

[628] Kake ëjo kulikae: 'Mme
ol-oiboni lañg elle, amu etele-
jiahe.' Nepwo ninje asuj
Sendeu.

Now Mbatian was very aged and
he had only one eye. He therefore
did not see which of his sons was
before him and gave to Lenana the
insignia of the medicine-man (the
iron club and the medicine horn, the
gourd, the stones¹, and the bag), at
the same time saying: 'Thou shalt
be great amongst thy brothers and
amongst all the people.'

Lenana took the medicine-man's
insignia and went away.

Sendeyo then went to his father,
but was told that his brother had
already been there and been given
the medicine-man's insignia. When
he heard this, he was very angry
and said: 'I will not be subject to
my brother; I will fight with him
till I kill him.'

Mbatian died and was buried near
Donyo Erok.

When he was dead, some of the
people proclaimed Lenana principal
medicine-man, 'for,' they said,
'Mbatian told us that he would give
the insignia of his office to which-
ever of his sons he wished should
succeed him.' They therefore re-
mained with Lenana.

But others said: 'We will not
acknowledge this man for he is a
cheat,' and they threw in their lot
with Sendeyo².

¹ It is possible that these stones, which according to tradition were brought
many years ago from the north, may prove to be of some interest. It is
asserted that no European has ever been allowed to behold them.

[175] ² This is the story as told by the Masai. The official version is that
Lenana was chosen by the elders of most of the clans and districts on his
father's death, but that Sendeyo refused to acknowledge him, and was